

Mandatory Reporting – Female Genital Mutilation



Northamptonshire
Safeguarding Children Board



TEA-BREAK GUIDE



What is Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)?

The World Health Organisation defines FGM as “... all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons”.

The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as amended) narrows the definition of FGM **to not include:**

- a surgical operation on a girl that was necessary of her physical or mental health, or
- a surgical operation on a girl who was in any stage of labour, or had just given birth, for purposes connected with the labour or birth.

What if a woman is over 18 but was subject to FGM when she was a child?

The duty to mandatory report does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases or in cases where the woman is over 18.

What if I don't report?

If you do not comply, your professional regulator may consider the circumstances under 'Fitness to Practice' proceedings.

Referring to Children's Services

If you believe that a child has been the victim of, or at risk of FGM then you should also refer the child to MASH by following the NSCB Referral Process. This is not part of your legal duty but is the action all professionals should take to ensure the safety and wellbeing of a child. For more information on FGM including the referral process, how to spot signs, flowchart of practitioner response screening tool access the NSCB Procedures Manual [here](#).

Are you under a duty to notify the Police if you think a child under 18 has been the victim of FGM?

Where a person is in a regulated profession (i.e. a teacher, social worker or healthcare professional) and in the course of their work they believe that an act of female genital mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl aged under 18 years, they **MUST** notify the police.

What does it mean (What to do)?

Phone the police non-emergency crime number, 101, if a girl under 18 you treat or have contact with:

- a) Tells you she has had female genital mutilation (FGM)
- b) Has signs which appear to show she has had FGM.

When?

As soon as possible; normally by the close of the next working day. Longer timeframes are allowed under exceptional circumstance but always discuss with your local safeguarding lead.

Can someone else report for me?

No. This is a personal duty; the professional who identifies FGM / receives the disclosure must report.

Why?

FGM is child abuse and a crime. All professionals have a responsibility to care and protect vulnerable children.